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### Three Collections Bolster World & Ancient Coins Offerings at Heritage ANA Auctions

Taking place Thursday, August 11, at the Anaheim Convention Center, the ANA World & Ancient Coins Signature Auction will feature the Cape Coral Collection of Multiple Talers, the Redwood Collection of Swiss Coinage and the Isaac Rudman Collection of Mexican Coins, Part III.

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# Charles Cushing Wright and His Medals

Posted on 8/4/2016

*A look at the iconic 19th-century medals of Charles Cushing Wright.*

Charles Cushing Wright (1796-1854) was an important American artist and engraver. Often called “The First American Medalist,” Wright’s work is highly regarded for its quality and attention to detail. Many of his most beloved medals were produced in recognition of generals in the Mexican-American War, which took place from 1846-1848. This war occurred as the United States pushed further and further west under the doctrine of “Manifest Destiny” espoused by President James K. Polk.



*This is one of the earliest examples of Wright’s work struck at the US Mint, the 1838 New Haven Bicentennial Medal. Julian-CM-37. Image courtesy of Stack’s Bowers Galleries.*

When the battles ended, the United States claimed victory from a disorganized Mexico and gained nearly a third of Mexico’s territory. These lands included nearly all of present-day Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. Two of the most respected generals in American history were involved in the conflict: Major General Winfield Scott and Major General Zachary Taylor. In fact, just nine months after the end of the war Taylor would be elected president.



At the request of Congress, Wright designed a medal in honor of Major General Zachary Taylor, who would be elected president just nine months after the end of the war. It is designated MI-24 by R.W. Julian in *Medals of the United States Mint: The First Century, 1792-1892*.

There had already been two medals struck in honor of Taylor in 1847, but the quality was not very high and the medals were attacked in national newspapers. As a result, the Mint looked outside its staff to find an engraver for this new medal. They would not be disappointed with Wright's work, which was completed on June 15, 1849. The first medal was struck in pure California gold on July 4<sup>th</sup> of that year.



*Click images to enlarge.*

Wright's Zachary Taylor medals measure an astonishing 90mm across, and the engraving work is extremely detailed and intricate. The obverse features a well-executed bust of Zachary Taylor facing right, with oak branches and laurel below. The reverse is clearly the highlight of this medal, however.



*Click image to enlarge.*

It features an incredibly ornate battle scene encircled with two intertwining snakes. The engraving is intricately detailed with literally hundreds of soldiers, each individually sculpted and many holding long guns with bayonets. Even the tiny American flags are complete with stars and stripes. Others can be seen riding horses and trumpeting, as well as numerous cannons with smoke billowing from their bores. Wright was paid the handsome sum of \$1,600 for his work on this medal in 1849, the equivalent of around \$46,000 today. Julian calls the price “a bargain in view of the high quality of the work.”

Only a month after Taylor’s medal was struck, Wright finished the work on a medal to honor Major General Winfield Scott. This medal is designated MI-26 by Julian.



*Click images to enlarge.*

The obverse features an attractive bust of Scott facing left, with MAJOR GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT on a scroll above. Thirty stars representing the number of states in the Union are artfully arranged in the left and right fields. Once again, the reverse is far more interesting than the obverse. It features not one but *six* different battle scenes from the Mexican-American War: the battles at Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, San Antonio & Churubusco, Molino Del Rey and Chapultepec. These scenes surround a vignette of the capture of Mexico City by Scott on September 14, 1847. While the overall look of the reverse is perhaps a bit too “busy,” there is no doubt that Wright was clearly a master engraver.

Wright’s numismatic work was not limited to medals, however, and he designed some of the earliest coins struck during the California Gold Rush. At the time, California faced an extreme shortage of coinage due to the arrival of thousands of Forty-Niners.

Gold dust and nuggets were initially used in commerce, but this was inaccurate and slow. Private mints soon began operations but these were not completely above board and the value or quality stated on their coins was not always correct.



It was quite literally the “Wild West” until Congress finally authorized a private mint, Moffat & Company, to strike legal tender gold coinage. This program was put under the direction of the official Assayer of the United States, Augustus Humbert.



*Click images to enlarge.*

The Humbert pieces were struck in a multitude of different denominations starting in 1849 and with gold of differing fineness, resulting in a number of interesting varieties. The stunning obverse of these pieces was designed and engraved by none other than Charles Cushing Wright under a subcontract from the Philadelphia Mint. These “ingots,” as they were called, feature a defiant eagle holding a banner which proclaims LIBERTY in its mouth. The eagle is clutching a shield and a bundle of arrows, representing the strength of the country. At the bottom of the coin is a spot for the denomination: in this particular case, \$50.

This sampling of some of Charles Cushing Wright’s most impressive work shows that he truly did leave his mark on American numismatics. Not only did he create a large multitude of beautiful medals throughout his career, but he also helped create one of the most recognizable and desired territorial gold pieces as well. Unfortunately, Wright died just three years after his work on the Humbert gold pieces, at the age of 58.

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# Modern Chinese Varieties: 1988 G100Y Golden Monkey

Posted on 8/4/2016

*This is the 19th installment of our monthly column featuring modern Chinese varieties.*

This month we will feature the 1988 G100Y Golden Monkey. The Golden Monkey can be found with both a high and low date located on the obverse of the coin. Below is an example of the high date, which is also located far from the rim (**Photos 1 & 2**).



1988 G100Y Golden Monkey (obverse) with high date (**left**) and close up of high date (**right**)  
*Click images to enlarge.*

The second variety, the low date, is located close to the rim (**Photos 3 & 4**).





1988 G100Y Golden Monkey (obverse) with low date **(left)** and close up of low date **(right)**  
*Click images to enlarge.*

Both of these coins share a common reverse featuring the Golden Monkey  
**(Photo 5).**



1988 G100Y Golden Monkey (reverse)  
*Click image to enlarge.*

Look for another interesting variety to be featured next month.

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# NGC Registry News

Posted on 8/4/2016

*New NGC Registry world sets are available.*

July has been a busy month here at NGC in Florida. We are thrilled to present even more new world NGC Registry sets. There is plenty of time before the 2016 awards deadline descends, so check out these new sets now. We are excited to see how you, our valued collectors, enjoy the new offerings.



Check out the new set list, below and let us know if you have other suggestions for new sets at [registry@ngccoin.com](mailto:registry@ngccoin.com). Also, please let us know if you need a slot added, and we will get it added for you as soon as we can. Keep those requests coming in, and thank you for your support.

## New Sets:

- Australia - Commemorative: Silver \$5, 2014-Date, Mint State
- Australia - Commemorative: Silver \$5, Sydney Olympics, 2000, Proof
- Australia - Commemorative Set Name: Silver \$5, 2001-Date, Proof
- Bahamas: Silver \$5, Elizabeth II, 1966-Date, Mint State
- Bahamas: Gold \$20, Elizabeth II, 1967-1973, Mint State
- Bermuda: Silver \$1, 1972-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Silver \$1, 1972-Date, Mint State
- Bermuda: Silver \$2, 1990-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Silver \$3, 1996-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$3, 1998-Date, Mint State and Proof
- Bermuda: Silver \$5, 1987-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Silver \$9, 1996-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$10, 1989-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$15, 2000-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Silver \$25, 1975-Date, Proof



- Bermuda: Gold \$25, 1989-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$30, 1997-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$50, 1977-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Silver \$60, 2007-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$60, 1996-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$90, 2006-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$100, 1975-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$180, 1996-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Gold \$200, 1993-Date, Proof
- Bermuda: Platinum \$300, 2006-Date, Proof
- China - Commemorative: Silver 20 Yuan, Qingming Festival, 1998, Proof
- Cook Islands: Silver \$10, 2015-Date, Mint
- Dominican Republic: Silver Collector Coinage, 1979, Proof
- Dominican Republic: Silver Collector Coinage, 1980, Proof
- Dominican Republic: Silver Collector Coinage, 1981, Proof
- East Caribbean Territory: East Caribbean States, Silver Type Set, 1981-Date, Complete Proof
- East Caribbean Territory: East Caribbean States, Gold Type Set, 1981-Date, Complete Proof
- Egypt: Fuad I, Silver Occupation Coinage, AH1338/1920, Mint State
- Egypt: Fuad I, Silver & Gold Type Set, AH1340//1922- AH1352//1933, Mint State
- Egypt: Silver 1 Pound, Commemorative Issues, 1968-Date, Circulation Issue
- Egypt: Silver 5 Pounds, Commemorative Issues, 1983-Date, Circulation Issue
- Egypt: Silver 5 Pounds, Commemorative Issues, 1981-Date, Proof
- Egypt: Gold 10 Pounds, Commemorative Issues, 1980-Date, Circulation Issue
- Egypt: Gold 50 Pounds, Commemorative Issues, 1986-Date, Proof
- Haiti: 20 Centimes, 1863-1895, Proof & Specimen
- Haiti: 50 Centimes, 1882-1908, Proof
- Haiti: Gourde, 1881-1895, Proof
- Haiti: 25 Gourdes, 1973-1975, Complete Circulation Issue
- Haiti: 1863-1908, Type Set, Proof & Specimen
- Haiti: Silver 100 Gourdes, 1977, Complete Circulation Issue
- Jamaica: Silver \$100, 1986-Date,
- Jamaica: Gold \$ 500, 1992-Date, Proof
- Peru: ½ Dinero, 1890-1892, Circulation Issue
- Peru: ½ Dinero, 1893-1900, Circulation Issue
- Peru: ½ Dinero Type Set, 1863-1917, Circulation Issue
- South Africa - Republic: 2012 4-Coin Gold Krugerrand Proof Set

- South Africa - Republic: 2013 4-Coin Gold Krugerrand Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: 2014 4-Coin Gold Krugerrand Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: 2015 4-Coin Gold Krugerrand Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: 2016 4-Coin Gold Krugerrand Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: Silver and Gold Big Cat Series, 2016, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Natura, Gold, 1/4 Ounce, 20 Rand, 2002-Date, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Natura, Gold, 1/2 Ounce, 50 Rand, 2002-Date, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Natura, Gold, 1 Ounce, 100 Rand, 2002-Date, Proof
- Zimbabwe: Type Set, 1980-Date, Circulation Issue
- Zimbabwe: 1980-1996, Complete Proof Issues

### **New Slots:**

- Australia - Bullion: Kangaroo Silver Dollars, 1 Ounce, High Relief, 2010-Date, Proof
- Canada - Bullion: Silver 5 Ounce Coinage, 2015-Date, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: One Dollar, Commemorative Issues, 1970-Date, Mint State
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$15, 1992-Date, Complete Proof and Prooflike
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$5, Commemorative Issues, 1973-Date, Mint State
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$5, Commemorative Issues, 1973-Date, Complete
- Canada - Bullion: Silver 5 Ounce Coinage, 2015-Date, Proof
- Canada - Bullion: Silver \$50 (Five Ounces), 2006-Date, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Superman Series, 2013-Date, Complete
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$3, Commemorative Issues, 2004-Date, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Three Dollars, Commemorative Issues, 2004-Date, Specimen and Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$20, Crystal Raindrops Series, 2008-Date, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$20, 1985-2016, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$20, 2016-Date, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$20, 2016-Date, Proof
- Canada - Bullion: Silver Maple Leafs - 1988-Date, Complete, Including Varieties
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$30, 2005-Date, Proof

- Canada - Bullion: Silver Maple Leafs, Privy Marks Issues, Complete
- Canada - Bullion: Silver Maple Leafs - 1988-Date, Complete, Including Varieties
- China - Panda: Gold 1/4 Ounce Panda, 1982-Date, Mint State (Incl. Varieties)
- China - Panda: Gold 1/10 Ounce Panda, 1982-Date, Mint State (Incl. Varieties)
- China - Panda: Silver Panda Medals 84-Date Proof
- China - Panda: Panda Medals 84-Date complete
- China - Commemorative: Silver 10 Yuan 1984-Date Mint State
- Niue: Silver \$1, 2005-Date, Mint State
- Niue: Silver \$1, 2007-Date, Proof and Prooflike
- Niue: Silver \$2, 2009-Date, Mint State
- Niue: Silver \$2, 2006-Date, Proof and Prooflike
- Niue: Silver \$5, 1997-Date, Proof and Prooflike
- Peru: Dinero, 1893-1916, Circulation Issue
- Russia: 50 Kopeks, 1965-1991, Prooflike Issue
- Russia: Silver 3 Roubles, 1992-Date, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Silver 2.5C Flypress, 2003-Date, Complete
- South Africa - Republic: 2.5 Cents, 1997-Date, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Silver 2 Rand, 1992-Date, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Natura, 1994-Date, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Protea, Gold 1 Ounce, 25 Rand, 2001-Date, Proof
- South Africa - Republic: Nelson Mandela Commemorative Issues, 2000-Date, Mint State & Proof
- South Africa - Republic: 1/10 Krugerrand, 1980-Date, Mint State

Do you have an NGC-certified coin in your hand, and you're not sure where it may fit in the NGC Registry? We are here to help with requests and with other questions you may have. Feel free to send us an email, and let us know exactly how we can help. Reach us easily via email at [registry@NGCcoin.com](mailto:registry@NGCcoin.com).

If you're not familiar with the [NGC Registry](#), take some time to explore it, and see the many collecting options that are available. It is completely complimentary. If you have any questions, you may also click below for our help page:

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# NGC Accepting Submissions at Long Beach Expo

Posted on 8/4/2016

*Bring your NGC submissions to the Long Beach Expo, booth #431.*

NGC will be accepting regular submissions for all service levels\* at the [Long Beach Expo](#), at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, CA from 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 8 - 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 10, 2016. Check with show staff for cut-off time. **Cut-off time may change due to submission volumes.** All submissions will be sent to our office in Sarasota, FL. Services include World Services, Ancient Coin Services, Bulk, PHOTO PROOF® and more.

## Special Note:

- Due to the special handling required, NGC does not accept submissions of the following coins at this show for regular service submissions to be returned to the NGC offices: Coins over 3.5" (90 mm) in diameter and .39" (10 mm) in depth, March of Dimes 3-coin set, West Point 2-coin set, San Francisco 2-coin Proof set, Coin & Currency sets, 25th Anniversary Eagles, 20th Anniversary Eagles, Early Releases, American Liberty Series and 10th Anniversary Platinum Sets. These submissions must be sent directly to Sarasota, FL, by the submitter.

\*Does not include 5-ounce coins.

Questions should be directed to NGC customer service at [service@NGCcoin.com](mailto:service@NGCcoin.com) or 1-800-NGC-COIN (642-2646).

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United States



# NGC Ancients: Redefining the Biblical Widow's Mite

Posted on 8/4/2016

*The traditional, narrow definition of the biblical Widow's Mite is in need of revision.*

The Biblical Widow's Mite is among the most familiar, yet most mysterious, coins of antiquity. Truth be told, we don't know exactly what it was. The best place to start is the New Testament, where the widow's offering is described in the Gospels of Mark (12:41-44) and Luke (21:1-4).

*And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a farthing. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." (Mark 12:41-44)*

*Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." (Luke 21:1-4)*

In these memorable passages the coins are described only as small and copper, with no further details as to their identification. This is hardly surprising since the numismatic content of these quotations is purely incidental.

With there being no detailed description of the coin type (or coin *types*, as she donated *two*), this question is now impossible to answer. So it has been left to scholars, numismatists and Biblical historians to speculate.

The most popular suggestion, which has now become tradition, is that the

Widow's Mite is a prutah of the Judaeen King Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.). It is not clear how this became the universal choice, though, it probably is due to the extreme abundance of these coins in comparison with any other ancient Judaeen coin.



The anchor/star prutah of Alexander Jannaeus has traditionally been considered to be the Biblical Widow's Mite.  
*Click image to enlarge.*

In discussing this subject the Reverend Edgar Rogers noted in 1914 that "...with some degree of certainty it may be said that the popular coins for this purpose were the small bronzes of Alexander Jannaeus and his successors...". Though Jannaeus struck more than one type of small bronze coin, his most common issue depicts an anchor and a star. This type has popularly come to represent the Widow's Mite, especially since there is a very small version of this coin that likely was struck by the immediate successors to Jannaeus.

Historians and Biblical scholars are uncertain about when Jesus' crucifixion occurred. Estimates range from the late 20s to the early 30s A.D., and since the widow's offering is thought to have taken place late in Jesus' lifetime, one might wonder why the coins of Jannaeus have been singled out as the Widow's Mite. After all, at the time they would have been more than a century old.

The likely reason is that not only are they the most common ancient Judaeen bronze, but hoard evidence suggests they continued to circulate even long after Jesus' lifetime. Still, it is odd that this issue has been singled out above all others, and it is our belief that there is no reason to define the Widow's Mite so narrowly.

The fact is, untold millions of small bronze coins were issued by other Hasmonean (Maccabean) rulers of Judaea, from John Hyrcanus I (135-104 B.C.) through Mattathias Antigonus (40-37 B.C.), and by Herodian rulers, from Herod I "the Great" (40-4 B.C.) to Herod Philip (4 B.C. to A.D. 34).



Herod I "the Great" (40 to 4 B.C.) issued this prutah.  
There is no reason to doubt that many examples of this type circulated during Jesus' lifetime.  
*Click image to enlarge.*

We may add to those Hasmonean and Herodian issues the prutot of the Roman procurators of Judaea, including Coponius (A.D. 6-9), Marcus Ambibulus (A.D. 9-12), Valerius Gratus (A.D. 15-26), and perhaps even Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26-36).



This prutah of the procurator Valerius Gratus was struck in A.D. 24, not long before the widow's offering. There is no reason to exclude this coin type as a candidate for the Widow's Mite.  
*Click image to enlarge.*

Another point of interest is that the term 'mite' is a modern misnomer. Researcher Oliver Hoover notes that the term 'mite' means 'small cut piece' in Old Dutch, and that it did not come into use until the 14th Century, in Flanders. He also notes that in the original Greek text of the New Testament the Widow's Mite coin is called a *lepta*, and in the Latin Vulgate Bible, a *minuta*.

The most appropriate names that modern scholars apply to small, ancient Judaeian bronzes are prutah and half-prutah. With this in mind, one might suggest that the widow would have donated smaller half-prutot rather than prutot. But this is, perhaps, unlikely considering prutot are extremely common in comparison with the smaller pieces. Presumably the same was true in the early 1st Century A.D.

And to muddy the waters further, we should acknowledge that coins originating at



mints in Judaea were not the only ones that circulated in the Holy Land. The possibility always exists that one or both of the coins offered by the widow were, in fact, foreign coins, such as small Seleucid, Ptolemaic or Phoenician bronzes.

The point of this discussion is to demonstrate how broad the definition of the Biblical Widow's Mite should be if one is willing to break from a tradition that in truth has no solid footing whatsoever.

We believe the strength of tradition assures that the issues of Alexander Jannaeus will remain the generally accepted candidate for the Widow's Mite. However, NGC Ancients now willingly extends that designation to any small Hasmonean (Maccabean) bronze coin issued from 135 to 37 B.C., as we consider any of them to be legitimate candidates.

The same could be said for all Herodian and Roman procuratorial bronzes of small size that predate about 27 B.C. However, these coins are scarce (or rare) in comparison to the massive issues of the Hasmoneans, and they typically are collected with other goals in mind.

David Hendin, an adjunct curator at the American Numismatic Society and author of *Guide to Biblical Coins*, is among the chief authorities on ancient Judaeian coins. In a recent interview on this subject he noted: "The tradition of the Jannaeus anchor/star coinage being the 'Widow's Mite' is strong, yet it is absolutely not based on evidence drawn from literature or archaeology. Its selection seems to have been mainly a commercial matter that likely can be traced back to pilgrims visiting Jerusalem in the mid-19th Century and finding these anchor/star coins in the market."

He adds: "The truth is that any prutah or half-prutah coins of the Maccabees, Herod I and his son Archelaus, or the prefects of Judaea up to the death of Jesus could possibly qualify to have been the 'Widow's Mite'."

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# Counterfeit Detection: Altered Date 1815 Half Dollar

Posted on 8/4/2016

*The altered date on this half dollar imitates a true numismatic rarity.*

In the early part of the 19th century, the fledgling United States was in a crisis. US merchant ships were being blocked from conducting trade with mainland Europe by the British Royal Navy, leading to serious economic woes for the former colonies. This eventually led to Congress declaring war against Great Britain on June 18, 1812. Unfortunately this only seemed to make economic matters worse as it promoted paper currency to fall into disuse and bullion hoarding to become rampant.

The war finally ended on December 24, 1814 with the Treaty of Ghent, but it took a while for the economic situation in the country to return to normal. In fact, the US Mint did not have enough bullion to strike half dollars for most of the year. Once the bullion was finally acquired, Mint employees decided to reuse 1812 dies by punching a 5 over the 2 in the date. The Mint finally struck 47,150 half dollars in late 1815, all with the 1815/2 overdate.

The 1815/2 Capped Bust Half Dollar is a well-known rarity. Only one pair of dies was used to strike all of the half dollars in 1815 and an interesting story behind them adds mystique. NGC receives these rarities for authentication and grading from time-to-time, and the coin below is one recent submission.



*Click image to enlarge.*

A quick glance does not reveal any major issues as far as the coin's authenticity as a whole. However, if you look closely at the date, you will notice some irregularities.



*Click image to enlarge.*

The image above shows that the second "1" in the date is irregularly shaped and does not match the first. The base is not uniform on either side as it should be, and the top also looks too flat. The digit also appears to be wider at the top than at the base. Additionally, note the different coloration of the metal and lack of continuity in the flow lines in the metal itself. These are the result of intensive tooling that turned a coin dated 1825, which was worth maybe \$100, into a forgery of a numismatic rarity that would have been worth around \$4,000 if genuine.

This coin is what NGC denotes as "altered date." A moderately skilled forger used tools to move the metal that formed a digit "2" into the approximate shape of a "1." Below is an example of the date area of a genuine 1815/2 half dollar. Note the circled areas which are the remnants of the digit "2" underneath the "5."





*Click image to enlarge.*

Lastly, capped bust half dollars are one of the most widely studied areas of numismatics with regards to the examination of die pairings. Due to the fact that the dies for these coins were all done by hand, there are always slight variations in the design. Using the most-trusted resource of the capped bust series, *Early Half Dollar Die Varieties* by Al C. Overton, the actual die pairing of this piece was easy to discover. The coin had been altered from a genuine 1825 Overton-113 variety, one of the most common pairings of that year. As you can see in the photos below, all of the design elements match up perfectly (aside from the altered date, of course.)



*Click image to enlarge.*

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# USA Coin Album: The United States Coins Dated 1965 – Conclusion

Posted on 8/2/2016

*This is my third and final installment on the United States coins dated 1965, nearly all of which were actually minted during 1966. This time, I'll take a look at the 1965 half dollars.*

The Coinage Act of 1965, passed in July of that year, made sweeping changes to three of the five USA coin denominations then current. All silver was eliminated from the dime and quarter dollar, erasing 170 years of fine silver coinage. In a bid to tradition, and to appease the silver mining industry, the half dollar became a compromise coin with a net silver content of just 40%. To strike coins in a straight alloy of 40% silver and 60% copper was unthinkable, as this debased silver (known as billon) would have been dull in color when new and quite blackened after a bit of circulation. Instead, Congress approved a three-layer composition in which the center strip was 21% silver and 79% copper. On either side of this strip were outer strips of 80% silver and 20% copper, which gave the coins the appearance of fine silver without the substance of it.

The 1965 half dollars were the last of the new issues to debut. I've read conflicting reports saying that they were released in either March or April of 1966. The general public probably didn't notice any

change, as new pieces were just as lustrous as the 90% silver issue. When worn, however the silver-clad pieces did become a bit darker, and their billon center strip toned to a dark gray, exposing the debased core. The new coins struck up just as





well as the 1964-dated pieces, and they remained satisfactory in all respects. But by 1965 the half dollar was already becoming a scarce denomination in most of the nation, so this transition was all for naught.

Though a small percentage of this issue's mintage was struck at the Denver Mint in the final days of 1965, those coins supposedly were rolled into the figure for calendar year 1966. The reported sub-totals for 1966 show 63,049,366 1965-dated halves struck at Denver and 2,545,620 coined at San Francisco, for an overall production of 65,879,366. Since most sources state that the entire production of circulating silver-clad half dollars dated 1965-70 was struck at the Denver Mint, I suspect that the 1965(S) figure found in the Mint Director's Report is actually the number of Special Mint Set coins made for collectors (net sales of these sets were 2,360,000). This would place the correct figure for 1965-dated circulating half dollars at the 1965(D) total of 63 million pieces, but this certainly has no bearing on the availability of such common coins.



Mint State 1965 halves are plentiful, though most are quite marred by numerous contact marks. The fact that so many were hoarded as bullion after 1970 further reduced the number of nice pieces available to

collectors. While coins certified by NGC as MS-65 are fairly plentiful, this date becomes scarce in MS-66 and all but unknown in higher grades. The 1965 SMS edition for collectors is much more common in high numeric grades, since they were made with greater care and packaged in five-piece sets shortly after manufacture. There are several hundred certified by NGC as MS-68, but when the qualifier of Cameo or Ultra Cameo is added to the grade the numbers of certified pieces plummet. A small number of doubled-die reverse varieties is known for both editions of the 1965 half dollar, and these are highly sought by specialists.

Before leaving the subject of 1965-dated coinage, I'd like to include a few personal recollections. In that year was a newly-minted coin collector, and my knowledge of the field could fit in a thimble. For starters, the only coin book I had was the 1964 edition of the Yeoman's Blue Book (A Handbook of United States Coins). At that time I was not even aware that the values printed in it were average dealer buying prices and not retail figures. It didn't matter much, as I was too young to have any money for buying coins above face value. I was content to just fill the openings in my blue Whitman folders for Lincoln cents, as well as



Buffalo and Jefferson nickels. My Lincoln folder starting at 1941 had been printed in 1963, as the mintage figures ended with 1962. To keep it from becoming obsolete within a year of manufacture, Whitman had thoughtfully included printed dates through 1965-D. In the absence of any updated books or periodicals, I searched for that 1965-D penny (as well as 1966-D and 1967-D) for the next few years. It was only when I got my first Red Book in 1968 that I discovered there were no such coins!

Since I didn't graduate to collecting dimes for a year or two after discovering the hobby, I took only passing notice of the new clad dimes and quarters; for me, they remained simply money. It was not until the latter part of 1966, when I finally saw my first 1966-dated dime, that I got the bug more fully. At that point I began collecting all current denominations through half dollars. All of the 1965-dated coins were then available, though I did notice that the halves were not as often seen as those dated 1966. Also evident was that the cents and nickels dated 1965 were far less often seen than those of 1964 (It was not until years later that I learned of the date freeze on 1964 issues).

*David W. Lange's column, "USA Coin Album," appears monthly in The Numismatist, the official publication of the [American Numismatic Association](#).*

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# Chinese Pandas: ANA Show Pandas

Posted on 8/4/2016

*A history of the ANA Show Pandas, with details on the upcoming 2016 commemoratives.*

Great things happen at the ANA World's Fair of Money. In 2009, the show was held in my hometown of Los Angeles. The floor of the South Hall at the LA Convention Center is huge. That day it was crowded with visitors, exhibits and coin dealer's booths. In my shoulder bag was an unfinished manuscript of a book about Panda coins. Around the floor, I saw the tables of several dealers from whom I had mail-ordered coins, but had never met before.

I spent hours looking at coins and taking photos. One large table was unforgettable. The cases were filled with a mind-boggling display of rare Chinese gold and commemorative coins. It belonged to a Chicago coin company, Majestic Rarities. The owner was constantly busy, talking to people and selling coins. This was the first time I laid eyes on Nick Brown and we didn't speak. Little did I suspect that within a couple of years he would become one of my best friends and that I would one day dedicate the *Buyer's Guide to Gold & Silver Panda Coins*, the unfinished book in my bag that day, to him.

The ANA World's Fair of Money has long been the USA's top coin show. It is where collectors and dealers go to meet, to greet, to make deals, to see exhibits and presentations and – above all – to have fun. It is also the place where many Show Pandas were introduced. What is a Show Panda? Show Pandas are official Chinese Panda coins or commemoratives struck for a specific coin show.

Up until this year there were Show Pandas minted for five ANA conventions:

1986 Milwaukee

1987 Atlanta

1988 Cincinnati  
1989 Pittsburgh  
2012 Philadelphia

All of the Show Pandas from the 1980s have become scarce and valuable. Just 2,000 of the 1986 Milwaukee 5 oz. Show Panda were minted. They were packaged in blue velour boxes highlighted by a red ribbon. All were quickly sold. The 1987 Atlanta ANA 5 oz. Panda had the same mintage and the same result – sold out.



The first ANA Show Panda features an image of the Statue of Liberty, although the ANA convention that year was held in Milwaukee. *Click image to enlarge.*

The 1988 Cincinnati ANA Show Pandas faced a slower market than the earlier issues. The 1 oz. silver Panda (mintage 2,000) sold out again, but the first gold Show Panda did not. This happened even though the actual mintage was far lower than the planned 1,100.

The 1989 Pittsburgh ANA Show Panda stands out as the only one struck in palladium. Then there is a great gap in time before another ANA Show Panda appears. These are the 2012 Philadelphia 5 oz. gold and 5 oz. and 1 oz. silver Show Pandas. The 5 oz. gold, in particular, with a mintage of 99 was an instant hit.

The great news, as we await the 2016 ANA World's Fair of Money in Anaheim, California is that new Show Pandas will be released there. Three versions were struck at the Shanghai Mint: a 1 oz. gold (mintage 125), a 1 oz. silver (mintage 2,000) and a 12 oz. silver (mintage 125). These show Pandas will only be sold to ANA members. They will be available at booth 733 starting on Tuesday, August 9 while supplies last.



As always, the ANA convention will offer exciting exhibits and presentations. I once watched Zhao Qiang, the artist of the 2015 and 2016 Panda coins, carefully study coin exhibits at an ANA convention. I asked him what he saw in these designs and he answered, “Inspiration.”

Besides the exhibits, there will be many presentations. One that I plan to attend will be the Philippine Collectors Forum at 3:30 pm on Friday, August 12. Author Kyle Ponterio will discuss his research on countermarked Philippine gold coins. Some extraordinary examples of these are in the collection of the People’s Bank of China in Beijing.

See you all in Anaheim.

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# NCS Conservation: Fingerprint Damage

Posted on 8/4/2016

*Fingerprint residue can etch and permanently change the surface metal of a coin.*

Fingerprints can be unattractive and damaging to the surface of a coin. Part of Numismatics 101 is how to properly hold a raw coin. With clean hands, hold a coin by its edge only and do not ever touch the face of a coin. Holding a coin by the edge will prevent one of the most bothersome of problems to afflict coins—the dreaded fingerprint.

What can be done about a fingerprint that already exists, however, is a common request of the conservation professionals at NCS. Results of fingerprint removal can be somewhat mixed. Many factors can go into the creation of a fingerprint which can have an impact on the relative success in the removal process.



Canada 1974 S \$10  
The 1976 Montreal Olympic Games Commemorative has multiple light fingerprints that were able to be removed completely.  
*Click images to enlarge.*

Fingerprints are a form of residue. As with any residue, the concerns with the residue permanently changing the surface underneath are paramount. Time and

the environment are the enemy of residue and may be especially true of a fingerprint. With time in the environment the chemicals making up a residue can etch and permanently change the surface metal of a coin. Fingerprints specifically contain certain skin oils as well as other substances from our hands that can make this permanent change more pronounced.

Conservation efforts often can be mixed when attempting to remove a fingerprint. Fingerprints that are relatively new can frequently be removed in their entirety without damaging the surface underneath either by the fingerprint or with the removal process. A fingerprint that has had time to etch into the surface of the coin may be lightened to varying degrees. Conservation efforts on fingerprints that have had time to etch into the surface may have the visual effect of lightening the appearance of the print. More importantly, however, the oils that make up the print cannot further the permanent etching. No matter how much a fingerprint has been able to etch in the surface metal, further progression of any damage will be halted.



Great Britain 1841 Penny  
This large British copper coin has a substantial fingerprint across the obverse.  
Conservation was able to reduce the visual impact of the fingerprint and prevent  
further etching into the surface of the coin.  
*Click images to enlarge.*

While prevention is the best treatment to prevent a fingerprint from becoming permanent, there is hope. Even coins with fingerprints that have had time to change the surface metal can have their appearance lessened and potential future damage halted.

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United States



# From the NGC Archives: 1854 O Three-dollar Piece

Posted on 8/2/2016

*Though issued for 36 years inclusive, the three-dollar piece seems to have never found its niche in the American coinage system.*

Its odd value did, however, correspond to quite a number of banknotes circulating during the 1850 and early 60s.



The New Orleans Mint coined three-dollar pieces only in this, the first year of the denomination. A mere 24,000 examples were produced, nearly all of these becoming lost or heavily worn. This fine specimen is pedigreed to the famous collection of John Jay Pittman, where it appeared as Lot 1888 and was described by cataloger David Akers as "well above average in terms of both its technical quality and its overall eye appeal." Struck from cracked and heavily polished dies, it offers many interesting features to the numismatist.

Are you interested in learning more about these coins? Click [here](#) to visit the NGC Coin Explorer and read on.

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# Three Collections Bolster World & Ancient Coins Offerings at Heritage ANA Auctions

Posted on 8/4/2016

*Taking place Thursday, August 11, at the Anaheim Convention Center, the ANA World & Ancient Coins Signature Auction will feature the Cape Coral Collection of Multiple Talers, the Redwood Collection of Swiss Coinage and the Isaac Rudman Collection of Mexican Coins, Part III.*

DALLAS — Heritage Auctions will be presenting selections from the Cape Coral Collection of Multiple Talers, the Redwood Collection of Swiss Coinage, and the Isaac Rudman Collection of Mexican Coins, Part III as featured collections in the 914-lot catalog for its 2016 [ANA World & Ancient Coins Signature Auction](#) in Anaheim, California, August 11.



The Cape Coral Collection of Multiple Talers is amongst the most refined pre-unified German collections in existence. The diverse offerings include a [1620 Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel Freidrich Ulrich 10 Taler MS61 NGC](#). Weighing nearly 300 grams, it is a truly commanding piece. "It is an improbable survivor, not only the finest example of the type we have seen, but probably among a handful of the finest extant pieces of this denomination in silver from any issuer," said Cristiano Bierrenbach, Executive Vice President of International Numismatics at Heritage Auctions.

Immediately following the sale of the Cape Coral Collection will be a session for Part One of the Redwood Collection of Swiss Coinage. Spanning more than 500 years, the collection samples every facet of Switzerland's numismatic history.



Isaac Rudman's 146-piece collection of Mexican Philip V pillar coins is totally complete, with many pieces the finest of their types. The collection is headlined by a [1732 8 Reales Mo-F MS63 NGC, KM 103](#). Exhibiting full mint bloom, this mint state example is the second finest certified at NGC. "We are proud to offer the Philip V series of pillar coins from the Rudman collection," said Cristiano Bierrenbach, Heritage's Executive Vice President of International Numismatics. "Given the totality of the collection and its incredibly high quality, this group is indisputably the most important of its kind ever offered to the public."

The ANA event culminates with the Platinum Night Session on the evening of August 11, where more than 500 carefully selected treasures from around the globe are presented. In addition to featured collections, Heritage will be presenting an exceptionally rare Great Britain [1933 George V Penny MS63 Brown NGC](#), one of 7 examples known. Just 3 of the 7 are thought to be in private hands today, with no recorded sales of any of them in over a decade. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to own one of the most elusive and coveted coins in British numismatics," said Bierrenbach. "This very coin inspired a whole generation of British numismatists, who began collecting by rummaging through their pockets in the hope of finding a 1933 George V penny."

In Ancient Coins, collectors will have the rare opportunity to bid on one of the most storied coins in Judean numismatics. [A Jewish War \(AD 66-70\) Year 5 AR shekel Choice VF? NGC](#) excavated at Masada is expected to draw considerable activity. As one of the few surviving pieces from the Fall of Jerusalem, a coin such as this is exceptionally rare and an integral part of the history of Judea.

*Further highlights include, but are not limited to:*

**[Ancients: Caracalla \(AD 198-217\) with Geta as Caesae AV aureus Choice AU? NGC.](#)**

**[Ancients: Ptolemaic Egypt Ptolemy I Soter as King AV stater MS? NGC.](#)**

**[Ancients: Macedonian Kingdom Alexander II the Great AR decadrachm Choice XF NGC.](#)**

**[Mexico: 1733 Philip V 8 Reales Mo-MF Prooflike NGC, Finest Extant.](#)**

**[German States: 1767-ARW Fürstenberg-Stühlingen Joseph Wenzel 4 Taler MS64 NGC.](#)**

Hi-Res images available:

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*This is a guest article. The thoughts and opinions in the piece are those of their author and are not necessarily the thoughts of the Certified Collectibles Group.*



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